

Halo: Return of the Covenant

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Summary: Three hundred years after the first Covenant war, Humanity has rebuild their empire. Now the Covenant are back to destroy Humanity once and for all.

1. Chapter 1

The war with the Covenant is not over. The Elites have left the Covenant, which had been decimated by the Flood. Paving the way for the Brutes to take their place in the Covenant, which is still determined to destroy humanity and obtain ultimate victory for their gods.

Thanks to Cortana and Spartan 117 humanity was saved in the war with the Covenant and the Flood. Now two hundred years later mankind has rebuilt their empire spanning over three hundred colony worlds. Thanks to Cortana's files on Forerunner and Covenant technology the UNSC's technology is now as advanced as the Covenant's, some believe.

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><p>0200 hours, February 19, 2754 (Military Calendar) UNSC long range censor station 18, in high orbit around Planet Ageko, Farinata System, class 4 gas giant**.

"Lieutenant commander Davidson reporting for duty."

"Verified and logged commander."

"Station status Hera?"

"Matter antimatter reactors operating at forty percent, plasma beam cannons on standby, particle beam cannon on standby, antimatter missile tubes on standby, sensors operating at one hundred percent, section seven has been powered down for maintenance, shield."

"Thank you Hera that's enough, any sensor contacts Petty Officer?"

"No sir."

"Really how do you know, you don't even have your screen on the sensors, you're watching a movie."

"Sir there isn't anything out there."

"How would you know you're not even watching the sensors. I will not have any slacking off on this station Petty Officer, now turn off that movie and get back to work or I'll throw you in the brig!, that goes for all of you!"

The various crewmen spun around in their seats and went back to work. Commander Davidson had only been at sensor station eighteen for six months and even thought his crew was bored with the daily routine he was not about to let his crew slack off. He was an officer in the UNSC navy and he had a duty to perform.

"Hm?"

"Something on your sensors Petty Officer?"

"Yes sir."

The Petty Officer replied rolling his eyes.

"Six contacts in slipspace, unknown silhouettes, their heading puts them on a course for us sir."

"Sir."

"Yes Chief."

"We are due to take on supplies; those ships could be the supply convoy on its way."

"Maybe? But the convoy isn't due for another eight days, Hera request a security identification code from the approaching ships."

"Yes sir."

Hera , the stations AI appeared again in the stations operations center this time in female armor.

"Commander I've tried all known frequencies, no responses."

"I see you're just as worried as I am Hera."

"Yes sir."

With those words every man and woman faces went from tired and bored, to serious and wearied.

"Raise shields, arm all weapons, all hands to battle stations."

"Yes sir sounding general quarters."

"How long till those ships get here."

"We're minute's away sir."

"Hera send a report to FleetCom on Acheron, tell them we have unknown ships bearing down on us, no response to communications, send them our sensor logs as well."

"Aye sir sending."

* * *

><p>Six minutes had seen like six years for the stations crew, for most of them this had been a boring do nothing assignment, now they had six unknown ships coming in and their commander was preparing for the worse.<p>

"Subspace disruption, hear they come."

As the first ship emerged from slipspace it fired a powerful beam at the station, the hit knotted the commander off his feet.

"Hera what the hell was that?"

"High energy particle beam sir, shields at eighty nine present."

"Weapons return fire, fire at will."

"Aye sir firing plasma and particle cannons, loading missiles."

A second blast struck the station.

"Sir the other ships have opened fire on us."

"Thank you Hera."

"They also appear to be using some kind of pulse plasma cannon."

"Who are we dealing with here Hera?"

"I believe they are Covenant sir."

"What!"

"The Covenant hasn't been seen in over three hundred years."

"Yes sir but the energy signature of those ships is ninety percent Covenant, as is the weapon signature."

"Great just great, can we send another messages to FleetCom?"

"No sir they re jamming us."

"What kind of ships are we dealing with here?"

"Three frigates two cruisers and one battleship sir, correction two frigates, one enemy target destroyed sir."

Two more particle blasts rocked the station.

"Hera shield status!"

"Down to forty five present sir."

"Commander!"

"What is it Petty Officer?"

"More Subspace disruptions, ships slipping in."

"How many?"

"Fifteen sir."

The Petty Officer looked scared.

"Why didn't we detect them?"

"I don't know sir."

"Hera enact the Cole protocol now!"

"Aye sir purging navigational databases now. We have incoming particle cannon fire."

Half a dozen particle cannon blasts hit the station draining its shields and damaging the station.

"Hera what's our status?"

Asked Commander Davidson looking around at his operations center, half his crew was dead and most of the equipment was blown out and he had taken a blow to the head.

"I don't know sir I've lost my connections with most of the station."

"Can we launch any slip probes?"

"Yes sir twenty four of them are still on line."

"Good load everything that's happened hear into their databases and launch them."

"Aye sir loading and launching, probes have entered slipspace, income enemy fire."

Sixteen high energy particle blasts headed for the unshielded and damaged station.

2. Chapter 2

1300 hours, March 02, 2754 (Military Calendar) / Planet Acheron, Century System, Acheron Military Complex, FleetCom War Room.

"This meeting will now come to order, we will now discuss the ONI findings on the attack of February nineteenth on sensor station

eighteen, and what if any actions are to be taken in response, Admiral Takai."

Vice Admiral Richard Takai was a tall bald man in his late sixties, he had spent most of his career in the Office of Naval Intelligence, he had spent three years as part of the UNSC's JAG office, but didn't like it and had went back to being an ONI spook. He had tried to prevent himself from being promoted to Admiral, but when he was in his early fifties he decided that sneaking around in the dark was a young man's game, by sixty he had become a Vice Admiral and the head of ONI, after which he became known as the ONI spy master.

"Sir our findings don't point to anyone, yet."

"Really Takai if the answer was a snake it would have bit you."

"Really Admiral Benson, and who do you think is responsible."

Takai hated being second guessed, let alone from someone like Admiral Benson. Rear Admiral Amanda Benson had spent her career on starships going from one ship to another; and rose thru the ranks very quickly. By the time she was thirty eight she held the rank of captain and command of her own cruiser. By forty she had become an Admiral for taking down the Schoepenhauer rebellion single handily, by attacking the enemy space dock, with the enemy fleet still inside. Technically the rebels hadn't done anything, but they had taken over the space dock, but this had not been confirmed, so FleetCom decided to wait and gather more information. Benson was not about to wait for the ONI spooks to run around and confirm what she already knew in her gut, she attacked first and asked questions later. When the debrie was later investigated, they found heavy starship weapons, six old frigates, four old destroyers, a dozen freighters that were being modified so they could mount the heavy weapons and enough small arms for a very large army. She had stopped the rebellion before it had even begun. In the years that fallowed she was given command of the seventh fleet which she turned into a feared fighting machine, and by forty five she was appointed to the UNSC command counsel. But to Admiral Takai she was a hot head who should have been demoted and relieved of her command, and certainly not put on the command counsel.

"The Covenant obviously, the stations AI states that the energy and weapons signature is Covenant, in the logs that were recovered."

"No it does not; it states that the signatures were ninety present Covenant. It could be anything, another race that found Covenant technology and then put their own spin on it, or pirates, or rebels, also the design of the enemy ships are unknown, we just don't have enough information for an accurate conclusion right know."

"We have all information we need! Admiral Halsey we should mobilize the whole UNSC and prepare for war."

"That is provocative and unnecessary."

"Really Takai and what would you do, wait."

"Yes we need more information; we shouldn't just jump into anything without looking."

"And while your spooks are looking around, the enemy will be attacking our outer colonies without any serious oppression."

"Ok, I think we've heard both your opinions, Admiral Smirnoff your thoughts?"

Vice Admiral Albert Smirnoff was a short man who still had his black hair despite being in his early sixties he had spent his career all over the UNSC map. Starships, bases, R and D, even some black ops with ONI. What nobody but Admiral Halsey knew was that Smirnoff's intelligence was beyond genius, everything he did came so easily, and most of the time he was bored with his life and career. Even in combat he could predict where and when the enemy was going to be before they even knew. The gift of a keen strategic mind assured his rise thru the ranks very quickly. When he met Admiral Halsey, Halsey saw his potential and placed him in charge of earth's defences, and fleets. The reason for placing him on earth was so he could make tactical and strategic forecasts for the entire UNSC.

"I would have to agree with Admiral Benson, it is the Covenant. In the years after the war with the Covenant, many high level officers believed that most of the Prophets had survived the destruction of High Charity and were planning new attacks against us. But at that time the UNSC didn't have the forces to do anything about it, as such nothing was done. In the years that followed nothing happened, as such the consensus was that the Covenant was destroyed by the flood. Now it seems they have been rebuilding their forces, as well as improving their technology."

"What do you think our response should be?"

"Send the fifth and eighth fleets to reinforce the other colonies and have the seventh fleet in reserve to back up the other fleets in case of an attack. When the public asks about the deployments we should just tell them that it's an excursive, as well as the various personal involved; only ship and unit commanders as well as ship AI's, should be told of what the fleet deployments are really about. The fleets should have full complaints of marines as well, in case of planetary invasion."

"So you're expecting the worse Smirnoff?"

"Yes Sir."

"Given the fact that all our colonies have shield generators around their major cities, they're going to have to use ground forces in order to get at our population."

For a minute everyone in the room stayed silent knowing what kind of war the Covenant we going to be waging against the human race.

"That being said General Skyfalls do you believe that your marines are ready to face what we think is coming?"

General Joshua Skyfalls was the head of UNSC's marine core, a medium size man of Native America descent. He spent most of his career with the Orbital Drop Shock Troopers, or Helljumpers as they were known in the UNSC. Skyfalls was a marine thru and thru, every morning he would wake up at 0500 hours and did a two hour work out. Every

weekend he would shoot at the local range, so as to not let his skills get rusty.

"Yes sir my troops are ready for anything the Covenant can throw at us. But I would like to request that we begin mass production of munitions, now. Our current supplies in the face of a major Covenant offensive would only last a few weeks at best."

"I agree. Said Smirnoff looking a little shaken."

"Very well. Admiral Stark I want you to begin training more Spartans, if history has any bearing on what we all believe is about to happen we're going to need all the Spartans we can get."

Vice Admiral Constanza Stark was the head of the UNSC's research and development branch, as well as the head of the new Spartan IV program. She was a medium size woman of fifth five who was more scientist than soldier, but she could fight just as well as any other soldier. Both she and Admiral Halsey had gone thru the officer's academy together and had become friends, they had even served at some of the same bases over the years, which only reinforced their friendship, it was even believed that Admiral Halsey was the father of her daughter but these were only rumours.

"Of course sir I will begin the training immediately, said Stark looking wearied."

"Have you any idea how the Covenant came in undetected till they were almost on top of the station? Our outer sensor stations are supposed to be able to detect ships over a hundred light years away."

"Some wild theories sir; as you know we have our own slipspace masking system, but given the power requirements for creating the field and keeping it stable, well we have never been able to mount one on anything bigger than a frigate."

"Very well put your best people on it. Ordered Halsey."

"If there is nothing else this meeting is adjourned."

Everyone got up and started to leave.

"Admiral Stark remain a moment."

Admiral Mark Halsey was the Supreme Commander of the UNSC; he was a tall man of fifth four with a bushy moustache. He spent his career going from ship to base, like most naval officers. What set him apart from all the others was his natural leadership skills, and the fact that he could keep a secret. He knew how to listen to every one's opinion and then make decisions based on those opinions, but he also knew how to take command and make decisions without a consensus.

Once the others had left Halsey spoke.

"Do you have a problem with my order to train more Spartans Constanza?"

"Not in our production or training methods, but more in the moral area. Mark we're not just training an elite group of soldiers here,

and then enhancing them, we're actually manufacturing people."

Nobody knew that the Spartan program had been restated to combat the growing rebellion, beyond the command counsel and those involved in the program. But this program had more of a twist than the Spartan II or III program. In the past the Spartans had been conscripted at a very young age, trained for years in the arts of war, while at the same time being enhanced with drugs and gene therapy, and in the case of the Spartan III's having their growth accelerated. Then in the final phase of their training they would be augmented feather enhancing their already superior bodies. The new twist to the program was that they were being artificially reproduced. When the Spartan II's and III's went thru the augmentation procures their eggs and sperm were extracted and put on ice, then later used to create the new Spartans. When the new Spartan IV's were augmented the same was done to them. In a way the Spartan IV's were the children of the original Spartan's.

"I know Constanza but we needed them, and we are going to need more of them, now more than ever. After all there are only five hundred of them right now, and that is not going to be enough if it turns into all out war."

"Haa." Said Stark with a small smile.

"What's funny Constanza?"

"When the first Spartan's were created, it was to combat a growing rebellion just like ours. Then the Covenant war happened and they were needed more than ever. Now here we are repeating history."

"Not this time Constanza this time we're going to win, this time there is going to be nothing left of the Covenant, I promise you."

3. Chapter 3

0800, July 16, 2754 (Military Calendar) / UNSC Battleship Constellation, on route to Enkindu star system.

"Captain we're ten minutes for exiting slipspace."

"Thank you Catherine, but I don't think you came into my office to tell me that when the com is just as good for that kind of report." Said Captain Rothmen as he continued to work behind his desk.

"No sir."

"So what is it you wanted to ask me about?"

"It's our mission sir."

"Yes?"

"First of all there's no way this is just an excursive sir. First we have the whole fifth and eighth fleets deployed, with full compliments of marines. Second I hear that the seventh fleet has been put on standby for no good reason. Third there's that meeting you and

all the other fleet captains had a few months ago, and then there's a whole lot more. Word is that the UNSC just put in a massive order for weapons and ammo a few months ago, and sir we are fully loaded with marines and, WE HAVE TWENTY FIVE SPARTAN'S ONBOARD! I didn't even know they had restarted the Spartan program. Now sir something big is going on and as you first officer I think I have the right to know what is going on here."

"Catherine we're just going to Enkindu for standard ship and troop rotations, we're to take the place of some of the ships and troops there. As for everything else, you know I can't tell anything, then what I have all ready told you."

"Captain I don't like flying blind, and right now I'm as blind as a bat."

"I know, and if it were up to me I would tell you but orders are orders."

"Yes sir."

"Now you better get back to the bridge, I'll be there in a minute."

"Yes sir."

"Captain Rothmen."

A hologram of a young man in a seventeenth century British navy uniform appeared, as the commander left.

"What is it Horatio?"

"I don't think you should let one of you crew speak to you in such away, even if she is your first officer."

"I would agree with you for any other member of the crew, but she is my first officer and I want her to express her opinion, not just be a yes man. Or yes woman hehehehe."

"Understood sir."

A great flash of light cut thought space as the Constellation and her Battle group entered normal space. In total ten ships, one battleship, two cruisers, four destroyers, and three frigates, came out of slipspace. Captain Rothmen sat in his command chair, with Commander Patterson looking over the various stations on the bridge.

"Report." Asked captain Rothmen.

"All ships have safely entered normal space."

Answered his ops officer, a young 26 year old junior lieutenant.

"Captain."

"Yes Horatio what is it?"

"We appear to be behind Enkindu four's furthest moon."

"I can see that Horatio, thank you."

"Helm, bring us up and around the moon."

"Communications, order the rest of the battle group to do the same."

"Aye, sir."

As the Constellations battle group rounded the moon, what they saw stunned them.

The Constellation was an archangel class battleship, designed for ship-to-ship combat as well as planetary assaults. She was powered by four matter-antimatter reactors; she only needed three even under full battle conditions, the fourth was a backup in case the others went down. She was armed with two high-energy particle beam cannons, fifty plasma beam cannons, and thirty missile bays. She had double reinforced shields, meaning if her main shields failed the secondary shields would take over allowing her main shields to recharge. Her armour was just as impressive; it was made of a monolean crystalline compound that reflected seventy percent of the energy of any known weapon. She could carry up to a hundred Dragon Tooth fighters, fifty ship-to-surface water buffalo troop transports, and twenty-five work-horse vehicle transports. She carried a crew of seven hundred, plus a marine guard of three hundred. But she could carry a lot more, for today she carried a fully armoured Marine force of eight hundred, she was a fortress in space.

4. Chapter 4

0830, July 16, 2754 (Military Calendar) / UNSC Battleship Constellation, Enkindu star system.

As the Constellation battle group rounded the moon, they came upon thirty-two alien ships engaging twenty-seven UNSC ships.

"All hands man battle stations!" Shouted Captain Rothman.

"Aye, sir." Said Horatio, as he faded onto the bridge.

"Have all pilots report to their ships, and communications have the battle group fall into a defensive spread."

"Yes, sir."

"And communications get me the Agamemnon, use code 3."

"Uh, yes, sir."

The whole bridge crew looked scared.

"Helm, slow to one third, communications have the rest of the battle group do the same."

"Uh, uh, yes, sir."

The young ensign's hands were shaking while running her hands over the controls trying to keep up with the captain. Commander Patterson came over to the frantic ensign put her hand on her shoulder.

"Calm down, focus, you'll be fine."

"Yes ma'am, thank you ma'am." Said the ensign looking a little calmer.

"Captain I have the Agamemnon for you."

A holographic screen appeared in the forward section of the bridge. An old Asian man appeared on it.

"Admiral Yama, Captain Rothmen of the Constellation, commander of battle group omega six."

"Please tell me that FleetCom warned you that we were under attack?"

"I'm sorry sir we didn't know anything about an attack, on till we came out of slipspace."

"Well I was hoping that FleetCom had gotten or message that we were under attack."

"Sorry sir."

"Never mind. What's your troop load?"

"Full sir, all the ships in the group are fully loaded, we even have twenty five Spartans onboard."

"Good, we are going to need every gun we have on the ground."

"Sir, has the enemy landed ground forces?"

"Yes, we have lost a city already, and two more are under attack. I am sending the combat data to your ships AI along with your orders."

"Understood sir, am I authorized to reveille classified data about the enemy?"

"You might as well, the cats out of the bag now."

"Understood sir."

"Communications send the combat data to the other ships in the battle group along with our orders."

"Yes sir."

"Horatio open up coms to the whole ship, I want everyone on board to hear me."

"Online sir, go ahead."

"All hands this is the captain speaking. As some of you are a where the fleet over Enkindu is under attack what you don't know is by

whom. The fleet and planet are under attack by the Covenant, we have been informed that at least one city has fallen, civilian casualties will be high. Whatever you are feeling right now, do not let it distract you, now more than ever, because as of now we are at war. You can do this you will do this, the fate of the human race depends on us, and we cannot and will not fail, that is all."

"Horatio tell the Spartans to gear up along with all the marines."

"Captain they are already doing so."

A small smile crept across Captain Rothmens face as he heard Horatio.

"Horatio show me the combat data along with our orders." Said the Captain walking over to the tactical display table.

"Captain."

"What is it Catherine?"

"You might have been putting a little too much on the crew right now."

"No, they need to know the stakes. One way or another they are going to realise it anyway, might as well get it out of the way now."

"But sir we are about to go into battle, some of them may crack."

"Maybe, but better it be now then later. Pulse I don't think any of them will crack, we have trained them well."

"Yes sir a guest your right." Said Commander Patterson with a smile on her face.

"So let's study this data and our orders."

"Yes sir."

Horatio appeared on the other side of the tactical display table, opposite captain Rothmen and commander Patterson.

"Our orders are as follows, we are to head to the far side of the moon, opposite the Covenant fleet. When we are in position we will send a signal via laser pulse to the fleet. After they have sent the counter signal, we are to swing around the planet and attack the Covenant fleet from behind. At the same time while we are orbiting the planet we are to launch our troop transports so our ground forces can assist in the ongoing ground battle, also we are to check on the orbital station on the other side of the planet that has been evacuating civilians, they have been out of contact for some time."

"That is insane Horatio the enemy will see us passing behind the fleet and be ready for us when we come around." Said Patterson.

"The fleet will fire a full salvo of antimatter missiles at the

Covenant and dentate them between the two fleets. Their sensors should be blinded while we pass behind the fleet."

"There is no way to know if the enemies sensors will be blinded."

"Well Commander those are our orders, we must follow them."

"But Captain."

Captain Rothman turned to Commander Patterson and gave her a stern look.

"Yes sir."

"Helm change course for the far side of the moon, communication tell the other ships to do the same."

"Yes Captain."

5. Chapter 5

0914, July 16, 2754 (Military Calendar) / UNSC Battleship Constellation, Enkindu star system.

"All ships in position Captain waiting on your orders."

"Thank you Horatio, communications send the signal."

"Aye sir sending laser pulse now."

Hiding behind the moon the Constellation could not send a laser pulse to the UNSC fleet. So they had launched a small communications drone allowing them to send the point to point transmission.

"I hate this part you know." Said Patterson pacing beside captain Rothman's chair.

"What part commander?"

"The waiting, just sitting here while our fleet is fighting and dying."

"I know what you mean, but they have their job to do and we have ours."

"I know that sir but."

Commander Patterson was cut off by the communication officer.

"Incoming transmission via laser pulse."

"What does it say?" Asked the captain

"We are to wait two minutes after receiving this transmission, and execute the first phase of our orders."

"Horatio how much time have we got left?"

"One minute fifteen seconds." Answered Horatio

"Communications send a message to the battle group tell them to be ready to move in thirty seconds."

"Aye sir."

* * *

><p>0915, July 16, 2754 (Military Calendar) UNSC Battleship Constellation, Enkindu star system.**

Paul sat in his drop pod waiting for the drop. All his mind could do was go over his load out, his training, his responsibilities to his team, his fellow UNSC soldiers, and the millions of civilians on the planet.

"Your heart rate and neural activity are high Paul, is something the matter?"

"No Illyria."

"Really? You're about to jump into a war zone with aliens that almost destroyed the human race, and haven't been seen in three hundred years; even a Spartan should be nervous."

Paul was the leader of Spartan unit three; during the Spartans training they were put in squads of five and units of twenty five, the leaders of these units would later become Spartan officers, Paul was one of the first; given who his father was and how well he performed in all his training, it was obvious he had great things in store. Like all Spartan officers he was equipped with a military grade smart AI that was intergraded into his armour.

"Looks like we are moving out." Said Illyria.

"I know; I can feel the ship moving."

"Really? You're in a drop pod on a ship with inertial dampers, and can still feel the ship moving."

"Yes."

"I find that hard to believe."

"Whether you believe it or not I can feel the ship moving."

"If you say so." Said Illyria sounding annoyed.

"Where will we be dropped?"

"The port city of New Saipan, ground forces have lost most of the city, and covenant forces are systematically wiping out the cities remaining civilian population and UNSC forces."

"Why have the remaining civilians not been evacuated?"

"It's a city of two million Paul, getting that many people out of the city while fighting street to street has got to be next to

imposable."

"Of course Illyria."

"Shale I give you our mission orders now?"

"Yes Illyria; what are we going to be doing?"

A map came up in Paul's helmet display.

"Our team will be dropped here. Intel from the ground and satellites has located the enemy ground command center, here."

"Has this been confirmed by anyone on the ground? Or is this where they believe it is?"

"Give me a second to look at the data and reports."

It took Illyria only nanoseconds to dive into the massive amount of data that had been coming into the UNSC's battle net, get the data she needed and get out.

"No; no one on the ground has seen it."

"Then we will have to confirm it ourselves."

Paul did not like it when there was doubt about combat data. During his training he was taught that data and Intel can be wrong, and that he should not trust any data or Intel unless someone told him he or she had seen it with their own eyes.

"What about the other teams?"

"Their job is to provide us with support and look for any civilians in hiding."

"There won't be any left."

"Maybe not but we still got to look."

"Anything else?"

"Well yes, as a matter of fact there is. We are also to give the covenant a lot of grief."

"I don't understand?"

"Well, we are not to go sinking around. We are to blast our way through the enemy and make as much noise as we can."

"So the enemy turns their attack on us, which will relieve the pressure on the forces already fighting."

"Yes, ODSI troopers will be making a lot of noise as well, while the main reinforcements from the battle group are sent to the main staging area, and launch a counter attack."

"Good I didn't like the idea of sinking around anyway."

Machines jerked and moaned as the drop pods were lowered into launch

position.

"Ok big boy this is it, just remember there are two of us in here."

"I will."

* * *

><p>AN

I would like to thank Mythyllian for beta reading this chapter.

6. Chapter 6

1005, July 16, 2754 (Military Calendar) / UNSC Battleship Constellation, Enkindu star system.

"Drop states?" Asked Captain Rothman.

"All pods and transports away Captain we're empty. Answered the Ops officer."

"Helm, bring the engines to seventy five present; bring us around the planet."

"Aye sir, engines now at seventy five present."

The Constellations battle group had slowed down to lunch their drop pods and troop transports. As they rounded the planet they came around to the orbital station that was evacuating civilians.

"Communications contact station operations." Ordered Commander Patterson.

"Yes ma'am one minute." Said the young Ensign working her console.
"Ma'am I am unable to raise them."

"Horatio scan the station." Ordered Captain Rothman.

"Scanning captain. Captain their communication array appears to be offline."

"Well that would explain why they lost communication with the fleet. Said Commander Patterson."

"Captain I have additional data."

"I believe the damage was caused from the inside. I am also detecting none human life forms inside the station; as well as plasma discharges inside the station."

"You mean the station has been boarded." Said Commander Patterson; looking at Horatio annoyed.

"I believe that's what I just said." Answered Horatio.

"Contact our forces on the ground, tell them to get troops up to that

station right now!" Ordered Captain Rothman.

But before the ensign could contact the UNSC ground forces a massive explosion ripped out from the station. The station sheared and twisted as mutable smaller explosions ripped along what was left of its hull. Metal melted from the heat, debris and bodies were blown out, then nothing. Where once there was a station, there was only debris and death. As the bloom of station debris moved outwards everyone on the bridge was stunned.

"Horatio scan for escape pods, cargo containers with life signs, any sign of survivors out in the debris field!" Ordered Commander Patterson.

"I am not detecting any signs of survivor's commander."

"Then run another scan!" Said Commander Patterson, looking angry.

"I have run three scans Commander. As have my counter parts in the battle group they don't detect any sign of survivors."

"Then we will."

But she was cut off by Rothman, as he stood up placing his hand on her shoulder.

"Enough Catherine."

"But sir."

"Their gone. Horatio how many people where on that station?"

"Thirty six thousand two hundred eleven, Captain."

The Captain closed his eyes, standing by Patterson and his command chair.

"And they will not be the last." Said Captain Rothman in a loud voice as he circled the bridge, looking at every member of the bridge crew.

"This is war! It will be bloody it will be hard and people will die, military and civilian. And yes we are still expected to do our jobs and prevent this sort of thing. Because if we don't then those thirty six thousand people will just be a drop in an ocean of blood that well be filled with the blood of billions of our people."

For a moment everyone just stared at their captain. Then their faces turned from horror to anger. They all turned back to their stations.

* * *

><p>AN

I would like to thank Mythyllian for Beta reading this chapter.

**0945, July 16, 2754 (Military Calendar)/ City of New Saipan,
Enkindu star system.**

Paul hit the hatch release on his drop pod. The hatch pins potted and the hatch fell away. The Spartan got out of his pod with his PPG 14 raised, scanning the area for enemies. Paul was in a large courtyard, his eyes, helmet display and scanner showed no enemies in his immediate area. He went back to the pod and retrieved his PPR Mk 12f Assault Rifle, checked its power cell and saw it read full charge. After Paul checked his equipment he opened his team's encrypted comm channel.

"This is black one to black team report your status."

A moment later a voice came over his comms.

"This is black three, status okay; no enemies spotted."

"This is black four, status okay; took out three grunts shortly after splash down."

"Black two reporting, I'm fine to; no bad guys in site, but I got some on my scanner."

"This is black five, status okay; no enemies spotted, but I got a few on my scanner that are close."

"If they see you take them out." Said Paul. "Everyone move into the buildings and wait for orders."

Paul moved out of the courtyard and into one of the buildings.

"Illyria, show me where the rest of the team is."

A map popped up in Paul's Helmet display, showing the city and his team members. Paul looked it over, and then decided on a rendezvous point.

"This is black one I am sending you a rendezvous point. Head there and do your best to avoid contact with the enemy."

"Isn't that in contradiction to our orders?" Asked Illyria, as Paul bargained moving through the building.

"No."

"Well we were told to make Covenant focus on us, by blasting our way in."

"I know."

"Then why did you just tell your team to avoid the Covenant."

"Because when we do start to push our way through the enemy force I want us together, working as a team."

"Ah, I see."

After exiting the building, Paul started to make his way to the rendezvous point. Staying in the shadows he moved like a ninja from building to building, making sure to avoid the main streets. As he moved his scanners would pick up a small group of unknown life forms moving in the direction of the main UNSC forces. In the dissident he could hear the sounds of battle. Paul had arrived and the building where he was to rendezvous with his team, he was the first. he sat down on a large piece of debris and looked thou the open roof to the sky.

"Penny for your thoughts." Asked Illyria.

"What?"

"An old saying, it means what are you thinking."

"I wish I could see the stars, but the clouds are in the way."

"Yes it is dark here."

Paul jumped from his seat and swung his rifle up, aiming at the doorway ready to fire.

"Even in stealth mode I can't seek up on you." Said a voice.

"Ryan."

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><p>AN would like to thank Mythyllian for beta reading this chapter.

8. Chapter 8

1015, July 16, 2754 (Military Calendar) / UNSC Battleship Constellation, Enkindu star system.

The debris of Enkindu's destroyed station continued to move outward. Millions of tons of metal, bodies, and various gases moving out in an almost perfect sphere. The horror and anger of so many dead began to weigh on Captain Rothman's crew, as well as on Captain Rothman. He knew what he had to do; follow his orders save the remaining population of Enkindu, then destroy the enemy forces. But Thirty six thousand innocent people were dead and all he could do to help them was watch as they were killed in a blast of fire and metal.

Captain Rothman sat in his chair with his crossed hands under his chin.

"Helm bring us around the debris field. Communications order the rest of the battle group to do the same." Ordered Captain Rothman.

The constellations engines came to life rolling and swinging the ship in a new direction as the ship began to move again.

Commander Patterson moved about the bridge checking over the crew's stations at the same time giving them quite talks as she moved from station to station. Patterson walked over to the Captain.

"You okay sir?"

"Our turn for a little talk, huh, Catherine?"

Patterson looked and the Captain with a small smirk on her face.

"My responsibility is to the crew, you are part of the crew."

"I just watched thirty six thousand people die in a matter of seconds, Catherine, how do you think I am supposed to feel?" Said Rothman in a low angry voice. "I'm sorry Catherine I'll be fine, just need to focus on the here and now then I will have time for my emotions."

"Yes sir, I know how you feel." As the Commander lowered her head.

The communications officer broke the silence that had been on the bridge for what seemed like hours.

"Captain we are getting a message from the destroyer Sirens Song; they say they are detecting an enemy ship on their long range scanners."

"What!" Said Captain Rothman rising from his seat.

* * *

><p>1010, July 16, 2754 (Military Calendar) City of New Saipan, Enkindu star system.**

Paul had rendezvoused with the rest of his team.

"So, boss-man, what's the plan?" Asked Ryan

Unlike the other Spartans, Ryan was a smart-aleck. He was a good soldier and followed orders like all the other Spartan's, but he had a big mouth and most of the time he did not really follow military protocol, which got him into trouble, a lot, but he was excellent with explosives and loved heavy weapons. That was one reason Paul had him on his team. The other was that he did not trust Ryan; Paul wanted to keep an eye on him at all times.

"The plan." Said Paul. "Is to head for what is believed to be the enemy command post here." Paul pointed at the small hollow map he had set up.

"If we follow this route through the back alleys we should be able to avoid the Covenant." Said Jenna, showing a route on the hollow map.

Jenna was the team's sniper. She had the uncanny ability to find concealed spots where no one would think to look. She was more of a lone wolf, which was unusual among the Spartan's, as they were trained to work in teams.

"No." Said Paul.

"Okay, then we-."

Paul put up his hand to stop Jenna.

"We will be taking this route to our target." Said Paul, showing a new route on the map.

"But that route is taking us down the main streets." Said Ryan. "They will have troops all over the place. There will be no way we can avoid contact with the enemy before we reach our target."

"I know." Said Paul.

"This is a new one." Said Arthur.

"A new one!" Said Ryan. "Not that I'm complaining, I'm probably going to love this, but Paul has never given us such fun orders."

Great. Paul thought. Here comes Ryan's blood lust.

"Yes, your right, normally I would not be taking such a risky route, but our orders are to draw the enemy away from the main forces, and get to the enemy command post."

"Really? I'm really starting to love this plan. But when we reach the command post what are we to do? Take out the commander there?"

"The orders are not clear about that part."

"What do you mean, they just told us to get to the command post and that's it?"

"Yes Ryan." Said Paul standing perfectly straight.

"So the higher ups don't think we are going to make it to the command post alive."

"Or they are in the middle of a planetary invasion and that part of the mission orders didn't make it to me." Said Illyria.

"Great so someone at command screwed up or our bosses just sent us on a suicide mission. But then again, what other kind of mission do we get."

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><p>AN I would like to thank Mythyllian for beta reading this chapter.

9. Chapter 9

1020, July 16, 2754 (Military Calendar) /Low orbit Enkindu four, Enkindu star system.

Roll, dodge, keep moving, and keep firing.

Lieutenant Jake Hunter kept on remembering the words his training officers had drilled into him. He was now over Enkindu trying to stay alive. The fighters of the UNSC fleet had been put into two wings, one was to intercept any craft headed for the fleet the other was to

intercept anything headed to the planet. This way the fighters would be able to protect the fleet and keep the Covenant from landing any ground reinforcements. Lieutenant Hunter was a part of the planetary defence wing; his only problem was that the landing craft came with escort fighters.

"Get off my ass horn boy."

Hunter was now in the fight of his life, or so he thought. His dragon tooth fighter was manoeuvring from side to side trying to stay ahead of the Covenant fighter that was locked on to him.

"Okay, let's try this."

Hunter pushed the stick down and went into a dive, keeping his engines at full power. As the Covenant fighter dove with him peppering his aft shields with plasma, a few seconds later he pulled the stick back hard and hit his forward and lower thrusters, cutting his speed to zero and pulling his fighters nose up and putting him in a head to head with the covenant fighter. Plasma impacted his forward shields as he fired his own plasma cannons at the Covenant fighter as they passed each other head on. As Hunter leveled out of his climb he found himself looking out into space, where there should only be stars and black, he saw hundreds of far off explosions, blue, green and yellow beams cress crossing in space. As he looked on he could not help but be in awe of the light show that was being put on, then all he could feel was terror, as he realised what he was watching. He tore himself away from the light show and looked down towards the planet, seeing the enemy fighter coming around on him.

The Covenant fighter was tear shaped with a long tail which was split in the middle, which appeared to be the ships main thruster. On the port side of the fighters head there was what appeared to be a long half spear, it was as if someone had split a spear down the middle, blunted it and place it on the port side of the fighter. On the starboard side there where two large plasma cannons.

"Still want to fight?" Said Hunter.

As he rolled his fighter for a turn, another dragon tooth fighter came in level to the Covenant fighter firing its plasma cannons striping the Covenant fighter of its shields. Then as its shields collapsed the UNSC fighter fired its main weapon a small particle beam. The Covenant fighter exploded in a massive fire ball as its killer flew by.

"Always saving you ass." Said a female voice.

"Where have you been?" Yelled Hunter into his comm. "I lost you when we went after that enemy formation."

"It's not my fault that you can't keep up with me."

"I'm your wing man, we are suppose to stay together and watch each others backs."

"I was watching you back."

Hunter knew that Cassandra was smiling out at him every time she toyed with him. He also knew how to push her buttons.

"Fine Cass, let's not let it happen again."

"Fine." Said Cassandra, in a vary annoyed voice.

Hunter knew that Cassandra hated it when people called her by her civilian name, rather than her call sign, Jade.

"Attention all fighter and gunship wings assigned to planetary defence. Large enemy troop transport sighted at grid four, one by six, seven, two; all craft are to engage and destroy."

"Time to go to work hunter."

"I got your back Jade, just don't do anything crazy."

"You know me." Said Jade with a smile on her face.

She is going to get me killed. Thought Hunter. I just know it.

The Dragon tooth was the UNSC main fighter interceptor. Unlike former UNSC fighters the Dragon tooth looked like an old twenty first century fighter aircraft; with two small wings near the nose of the craft which housed varies control thrusters. The tips of the wings held the crafts main weapons two rapid fire plasma cannons that fired plasma like a machine gun. Housed within the wings were two thrusters along with two more in the crafts main body. On the crafts belly was its most powerful weapon a small particle cannon that could rip apart fighters and larger vessels. With shields becoming standard on all human craft, missiles were removed from fighters, since it toke three or four to kill a enemy fighter. So when the Dragon tooth was designed missiles were not included, since they were considered obsolete in fighter to fighter combat. The craft was designed for speed, manoeuvrability, and firepower.

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><p>The travel time to the Covenant troop transport had only taken Hunter and Jade eight minutes, but the Covenant transport was already under fire from UNSC fighters and gunships.<p>

"Jesus!" Said Hunter. "They said it was a large transport, not the size of a corvette."

"Take a look on your scanner Hunter, that ship maybe the size of a corvette, but it's got life signs in the thousands."

"Dam it." Said Hunter. "It's already entered the atmosphere."

"Stay on my ass hunter, that things got to die."

A second later Jade pushed her engines to full power, charging at the Covenant transport. The Covenant ship was not without defences, point defence lasers and anti aircraft plasma bolts filled the air as UNSC fighters and gunships were pursuing, firing everything they had.

Jade made a strafing pass on Covenant transports top side with Hunter following her, firing his own cannons as they passed over the ship and banked to port preparing for another run.

"These are the times I live for!" Yelled Jade over her and hunters private comms, barely dodging a plasma bolt.

"Oh ya right!" Hunter yelled back.

He and Jade were bearing down on the transport along with seven other fighters coming in for an attack on the ship's port side. The Covenant ship was being swarmed by UNSC ships, it returned fire but could barely track all the ships attacking it, her gunners were putting out a barrage of laser and plasma fire trying to take down any UNSC ship. Jade, Hunter and their fellow UNSC pilots were closing in letting loose plasma and particle cannon fire.

Hunter could barely think, all he could see was the enemy ship, the weapons fire all around him, it was like he was just watching it, his brain was off and his reflexes and instincts had taken over. Then out of the corner of his eye he saw four gunships firing missiles at the enemy ship's engines. The missiles impact collapsed the ship's shields and the remaining missiles hit the engines causing the enemy ship to list to starboard and lose altitude; by this time he and Jade were almost on top of the enemy ship, punching holes in her with plasma fire. "Pull up!" He heard Jade yell into his ear.

Shit! Thought Hunter as he pulled the stick back, scraping the top side of the enemy ship.

"You okay?" Asked Jade with worry in her voice.

"Ya I'm fine but my shields are down."

As Hunter said those words his ship was rocked by an explosion.

"Shit!" Yelled Hunter.

"Warning, port wing and engine damaged." Said Hunter's computer.

"Thank you, your damn machine tell me something I don't know!"

As the Covenant ship was losing altitude it was still firing, a stray laser blast had hit Hunter's fighter.

"Hunter can you hold it?"

Hunter's fighter was shaking violently. He was using all his strength to keep it level.

"Ya it's fine, But I'm going to have to land." As Hunter said those words his port engine exploded sending him spiraling down.

"Bail out!" Yelled Jade.

"You think!" Yelled Hunter as he pulled his eject lever.

Hunter's cockpit pins exploded just before his chair rockets fired sending him flying out of his doomed fighter. Hunter could hear the wind whiping all around him as his parachutes deployed, but it was not enough to slow him down completely, his chair hit the ground with a

load bang. Hunter felt the impact all thou out his body, he managed to undo the straps that had held him in and slumped over lying on the ground.

"You alive?" Asked a female voice.

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><p>AN thanks to Mythyllian for beta reading this chapter.

End
file.